

Burwash Neighbourhood Development Plan

Community Communication and Engagement Strategy

(version date 17 November 2018)

Introduction

The Localism Act was passed by Government in November 2011 and final regulations relating to the Act and regulating the process came into force in April 2012. The Act allows local communities to produce a spatial development plan for their area and, if 'made' (adopted), future planning applications would need to have regard to the policies within this plan.

Burwash Parish Council has decided to do a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) which may take between 12 and 18 months to achieve.

The key aims of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- To create local planning policies for Burwash which development proposals need to adhere to;
- To protect against inappropriate and speculative development and to shape better development for the area;
- To protect existing sites of outstanding natural beauty, conservation areas and the overall character of the parish;
- To co-create plans and initiate achievable projects for development that meet local need.

Two-way communication with the local community during the Neighbourhood Development Plan is vital for its success and ultimate support through the referendum; therefore, it is important to develop a coherent strategy of how this will be achieved and plan key stakeholder engagement.

This strategy sets a framework for communications to develop, promote, and support the Burwash Neighbourhood Development Plan and its consequent development projects. It gives direction to all media, online, internal, marketing, publications, and public relations communications activity undertaken on behalf of the Burwash Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.

We will use the most appropriate channels of communications to reach our wide variety of stakeholders including residents, employees, businesses, community partners, and all levels of government. We will seek to provide communications services on the most cost – effective basis.

Communication only works when messages are clear and easy to understand and when it is a two - way process. It's not enough to talk – we also need to be able to listen. Therefore, this strategy will set out to ensure that key messages are developed throughout the various stages of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, are communicated as widely as possible, and stakeholders are provided with multiple methods of contributing and opportunities for involvement.

Objectives

The objectives of the Communication and Engagement Strategy are to:

- Achieve effective two-way communication, leading to well informed decisions;
- Ensure that the implications of the development and making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan are understood by all stakeholder groups
- Enable residents and other relevant stakeholders the opportunity to take part in defining the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

- Ensure that all stakeholders and residents are aware of the Neighbourhood Development Plan process to include:
 - the roles and responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group;
 - the process of creation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan;
 - the schedule for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
 - the governance, approval, and acceptance of the Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- Ensure appropriate consultation with and communication to all stakeholders and residents, ensuring that:
 - Input into the development and approval of the Neighbourhood Development Plan has been included;
 - the current status of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is understood throughout;
 - appropriate input is sought from key stakeholders;
- As appropriate engage with Rother District Council during the development process and provide them with, amongst other things, a Consultation Statement setting out how consultation is carried out.

Principles

Our Strategy is based on the following principle:-

To provide the maximum information to the maximum number of stakeholders in the most effective medium at the most suitable times and in the most appropriate places.

This principle includes a number of key factors:

- Communication will be meaningful and appropriate.
- Information will be accessible.
- Quality mediums and methods will be used whenever possible.
- Communication channels will allow information to, through and across all levels.
- Information will be relevant and in plain English.
- Consideration needs to be given to the needs of people with disabilities and those whose first language is not English.
- The process will be transparent.

Tools and Activities

We shall use a variety of methods based on what reaches people most effectively and has most credibility. These include and are not limited to:

Tools to be used
Consultation events
Direct mail
Email lists
Events
Exhibition
Leaflets & flyers
Minutes of meetings
Networking
Newsletter
Parish website
Posters
Press releases
Stakeholders' and partners' outlets
Neighbourhood/key known members of the community
Website

The communication will be relayed using different methods and combinations for different groups as and when appropriate.

Resources

We shall make best use of the resources we have and strive to increase resources in keeping with the task. Our current resources, those that we have access to and can be applied to the task, are listed below in no particular order.

List of Available Local Resources:
Group members
Local councillors
Local newspaper
Consultation events
Parish Council & community Notice Boards
Annual Parish Report
Parish website
Information sharing events (exhibitions)

Timescales

Preparing a neighbourhood plan is a sequential process based upon an agreed project plan. The project plan identifies the following key communication points and the dates in which they should be carried out. The table below summarises the key elements in the production of the Plan and target dates. It does not show specific times at which communication and engagement will occur because there will be varying forms of engagement throughout the process.

Key Communication Point	Target Date(s)
Building the evidence base and community engagement	January – April 2018
Identifying projects and writing policies	April/ May 2018
Reg. 14 Pre-submission consultation	July 2018
Reg. 15 Plan submission	August 2018
Referendum	November 2018

It is important to note that these dates are aspirational and indicative.

Evaluation and Amendment

After the first 6-8 months following the implementation of the Strategy, the NDP Group will carry out a communications audit to assess the effectiveness of the strategy with both ‘internal’ and ‘external’ audiences. We shall consider in particular, who has not responded or reacted to our communications and equally who we perhaps have not effectively engaged with. We shall discuss the evidence/results carefully and use them to amend and improve the Strategy going forward.

How we will communicate

Stakeholder (s)	Format
Parish councillors in NDP area	Meeting mins/reports and presentations
Other elected members	Direct e/mail/reports and presentations
Parish Council	Meeting mins/reports and presentations
NDP sub (thematic or focus) groups	Meeting mins/reports/workshops and presentations
All residents in NDP area	Consultation events/social media/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/letters
Young people in NDP area	Consultation events – targeted events and social media
Clubs, community & voluntary groups in NDP area	Consultation events/social media/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/ Letter/ email
Elderly persons in NDP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters
Persons with disabilities and special needs	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters
Hard to reach groups	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters
School serving NDP area	Collaboration with teaching staff – direct work on wishes for the future woven into existing curriculum
All businesses/employers in NDP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/ Letter/ email
Retailers in NDP area	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/local press/posters/ Letter/ email
Service providers	Letter/ email /meetings
Statutory undertakers	Letter/ email /meetings
Major landowners	Letter/ email /meetings
Developers with interest in NDP area	Letter/ email /meetings
Rother District Council	Letter/ email /meetings
Neighbouring parish/town councils	Letter/ email /meetings

Surveys/questionnaires, drop ins and workshops will be held as and when deemed necessary. The methods outlined above are the key formats which will be used but are not limited.

The NDP website will be used as a continuous means of communicating with everyone.

We recognise that these events may lead to discussions that fall outside the NDP remit. Our intention in Burwash is to go beyond the production of a plan, by identifying new projects for development and to act on them together. In this way we will bring the plan to life, ensuring that our best ideas and aspiration take on a real shape, enhancing and strengthening our community and the lives we lead within it.

Key local stakeholders

The list below is by no means exhaustive but seeks to identify the key local stakeholders